

What is claimed is:

1. A method of stimulating a systemic immune response in a subject in need thereof, comprising administering to the subject a therapeutically effective amount of cells, wherein said cells are proliferation incompetent and have been genetically engineered to express sCD40.

2. The method of claim 1 wherein said cells are autologous or heterologous to said subject.

3. The method of claim 1 wherein said subject is a human.

4. The method of claim 1 wherein said tumor cells are rendered proliferation incompetent by gamma irradiation.

5. The method of claim 1 wherein said cells are tumor cells, bone marrow cells, stem cells, fibroblasts, lymphocytes, or combinations thereof.

6. The method of claim 1 further comprising administration of one or more cytokines.

7. The method of claim 6 in which said cytokine is granulocyte-macrophage colony stimulating factor, IL-12 or both.

8. The method of claim 6 in which said cytokine is granulocyte-macrophage colony stimulating factor and said cytokine and sCD40 are expressed separately or as a fusion protein.

9. The method of claim 1 in which said cells are administered systemically, peritoneally, intramuscularly, or intradermally.

10. A composition comprising a cell expressing a fusion protein comprising sCD40 linked to granulocyte-macrophage colony stimulating factor.

11. A method of stimulating a systemic immune response in a subject having an established tumor, comprising administering to the subject a therapeutically effective amount of a recombinant nucleic acid through which a protein comprising sCD40 can be expressed.

12. A method of stimulating a systemic immune response in a subject in need thereof, comprising administering to the subject a therapeutically effective amount of sCD40.

13. The method of claim 13 further comprising the step of co-administering to said subject an antigen, whereby a systemic immune response is induced to said antigen.

14. A method of suppressing growth of a tumor in a subject, comprising providing to said subject a therapeutically effective amount of sCD40 *in vivo* such that
5 growth of a tumor in said subject is suppressed.

15. A method of stimulating a systemic immune response in a subject in need thereof, comprising administering to the subject a therapeutically effective amount of cells, wherein said cells are characterized by: (s) a substantial lack of expression of MHC class I and class II molecules, and (b) an ability to express sCD40.

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